

MERTHYR AT HOME—BUT HOWARD IS CUP-TIED

WYCOMBE Wanderers, who have established a reputation of being one of the top non-league clubs in the F.A. Cup have a home draw in the fourth qualifying round of this season's competition. They take on Merthyr Tydfil at Loakes Park on November 6.

But the satisfaction of a home draw was somewhat blunted when it was learned that Howard Kettleborough, Wycombe's tall centre forward, is ineligible for the F.A. Cup. He played in the first

preliminary round for Dunstable Town and is therefore cup-tied.

The Blues' marvellous cup performances in the last three years, which included the third round matches with Middlesbrough two seasons ago, won them exemption until the fourth qualifying round. But Merthyr have had to come through five matches to reach this stage.

In the first qualifying round, Merthyr, who play in the Southern League Division One North, beat Gloucester 4-1 at home and then met Cheltenham in the second

round. This was to prove a difficult hurdle.

The first game at Merthyr ended in an exciting 3-3 draw. In the replay the match went into extra time when the Welshmen took the lead only to be held again by a goal in the very last minute. The second replay was held at Bath City's ground and ended in a convincing 4-0 triumph to Merthyr.

On Saturday, they made no mistake in the third qualifying round, winning 6-3 at Llanelli — one of the top Welsh League clubs.

In the league this season

Merthyr have produced contrasting performances and their current record reads P6, W1, D3, L2, goals for 7, goals against 10. Their cup run has put them well behind on league fixtures but their away form is impressive. In fact they have lost only once away from home in both league and cup matches.

There is a feeling of optimism at the Welsh club since Emrys Evans took over as manager at the end of last season. Evans has pledged himself to an all out attacking policy and uses a 4-2-4 formation.

But perhaps Merthyr's greatest claim to fame came when the great John Charles was a player and also manager at the club. Charles has now stopped playing.

One of the chief dangers is striker Mick Lenihan. He scored a total of 29 Southern League goals last season and is also finding the net regularly this term. But too often the defence has conceded too many goals as their 6-3 win in the last round suggests.

Overall, Wanderers must be fairly satisfied with the draw. A home tie is a real bonus and they could well have been given a tougher task. The clubs in their group were Darlaston, Dudley Town, Worcester City, Merthyr, Nuneaton, Kettering, Bedford, Barton Rovers or Wellingborough and Chesham. Chesham drew Worcester at home.